

Joseph A Brief *Shew'd*

CHARACTER

OF THE

ANTIEN^T CHRISTIAN

QUAKERS.

*Written by W. M. A Witness
for the Truth, as it was in the
Begining.*

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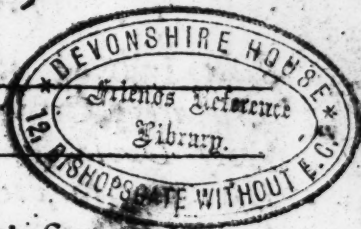
Supposed to be W^m Mead's -
who lost his love to Friends, and
the chief promoters of Good, in
the Society - it is to be noted,
that, though an extract is made,
to serve the turn, from Dr. Crook,
W. Penn is barely mentioned, and
G. Fox not at all, but larger ex-
tracts or quotations, from Back-
siders: I am credibly informed
that it was at his instance, or thro'
his means, that divers of the Jour-
nals of G. Fox were bound up &
issued without W. Penn's Preface.

AB

Wm Mead

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(I)



A Brief
CHARACTOR
Of the Antient
CHRISTIAN-QUAKERS.

First, In the North of England there was a few Religious People, that could find no Satisfaction to their *Immortal Souls*, amongst the several *Will-Worshippers* [having been amongst them] Met often together, to wait upon God, with frequent Prayers unto him, That they might attain to that Holyness of Life the
A 2 *Saints*

Saints Injoyed, Recorded in the Holy Scriptures; Crying unto God as did Holy David, Psalm. 42. 1. As the Hart panteth after the Water-Brooks, so panteth my Soul after thee, O God.

And it pleased God to satisfie their Thirsting and Breathing Souls, by giving them more *Grace*, which was Purchased for us all, by the Sufferings and Death of his dear Son, our Saviour, Christ Jesus, which discovered the way of *Truth* unto them, whereby they were enabled to walk in the delightful Path of Righteousness to pleas God, and so received power (through the alone help of this Inward and Spiritual Grace) to overcome all the Temptations of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. Yea, the Lord discovered unto them so much of his Divine Power, and Love, in their Assemblies, that their Bodies was made to Tremble,

ble, as *Moses, Habakkuk, &c.* at the power of Gods Presence, which some *Rude People* Seeing, called them, in Scorn, *Quakers, Isa. 66. 5. Jer. 33. 9.*

2. About the Year 1653. God sent some of them, to Declare to People, what God had done for their Souls, Declaring sometimes in *Market-places*, sometimes in *Steeple-Houses*, and *Meetings*; and many Thousands were Converted to the *Truth*, as it is in *Jesus*: That a worthy Man in the *South*, who was Converted to the *Truth*, through the power of their Ministry, Write a little Book, which he called *The Principles of Truth*, saith in p. 14. 15. &c. *By this Gift of God in our Hearts, we further Believe, That Christ Jesus Rose again from the Dead, according to the Scriptures, and Sits at Gods Right Hand in a Glorious Body; and we Believe, That our low Estate and humble Bodies shall be made*
A 3
like

like unto his Glorious Body, through the working of his Mighty Power, whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself, and that this Mortality shall put on Immortality. For though we Believe that Christ Jesus hath Lighted every Man with his Light, whereby Man may come to know himself Lost and Undone, as before is said, yet therefore is not every Man Saved, though the Grace that appears to all Men is Sufficient in it self; but some have the Grace of God bestowed upon them in vain, not liking to retain God in their Knowledge, though something within them shews them what is Good, but they reject the Counsel of God within, or against themselves, to their own Destruction, Luke 7. 30. (see the Margin) and yet it doth not follow, that the Grace is Insufficient of it self, no more than it follows, that Christs Death is Insufficient, because he tasted Death for every Man, and yet every Man is not Saved. Neither doth Regeneration, or the

the Believing in the Light of Christ within, make void the Death and Sufferings of Christ without at Jerusalem, no more than Believing the Scripture Testimony without, concerning Christ's Death, make void the Work of Regeneration and Mortification within: But as the Apostle saith in another Case, so I say in this, For as the Man is not without the Woman, neither is the Woman without the Man in the Lord: Even so is not the Death and Sufferings of Christ without at Jerusalem, to be made void and of none effect by any thing within, neither doth the Light within make that of none effect without, but both in the Lord answer his Will: For though there is, and may be, a Knowledge, and Belief, of what Christ Did and Suffered without the Gates, in his own Body, upon the Tree, and yet Sin alive in the Heart, and the Work of Regeneration not known, yet it can't be so where the Light within is believed on and obeyed; so as to have its per-

fect Work in the Heart, to Regenerate, and make all things New, and to be of God, this Man can never make void what Christ hath done and suffered without, and yet this New-Birth, or Christ formed within, and dwelling in the Heart by Faith, doth not limit or confine Christ to be only within, and not without also, but both within and without, according to the Good Pleasure of the Father to Reveal and make him Known. For he Fills all things, and the Heaven of Heavens cannot Contain him; and yet he is at Gods Right Hand, far above all Heavens, in a Glorious Body.

By JOHN CROOK, an Antient Labourer in Christs Vineyard, yet on this side the Grave, to the Joy of many Souls.

To

To which I add, the Poets Verses.

ETernal Love ought to be our Chief ame,
Life, in our Saviors Death, we duly claime,
In his dear Merits, all our hopes must be
Zone, of our Everlasting Life, is he,
A Bright Meridian of Eternity.

But how came this great Mystery to pass ?

Eternal Wisdom the prime Author was.

The thing is deep, and Mortal Minds are lost,
Heaven knows alone, what this dear Blessing cost.

Consider then, and let us still Adore

Omnipotence, which our weak Nature bore.

Compassioning us, he lay'd a side

Known Glory, and despising shame, he Dy'd

Sov'raign o're Death, with Death he yet

Comply'd.

But to return, They, for their faith-
 ful witnessing to the *Truth*, Suffered
 many Stonings, Finings, and Im-
 prisonments

prisonments (from Cruel Men) yet God never forsook them, so that they Sung Praises unto his Holy Name, when in Dungeons.

3. Their Message, and Labour, was to turn Peoples Minds to the *Gift*, or *Talent*, of *Light* or *Grace* in their own Souls (the way to Life) that it might be every ones *Chief Teacher*, and *Leader*, into all *Truth*, *Neh. 9. 20. John 1. 9. Tit. 2. 11. 1 Cor. 12. 7. Rom. 1. 19.* Which caused the said J. C. to Write, *What unwearied Pains Truth made many to take; to run too and fro, to Inform and Fore-warn their Relations and Acquaintance, lest they should neglect the Day of their Visitation; and they knowing the Truth should be Guilty of their Blood, because they had not fore-warned them, is known to many Witnesses. See Truths Progress.*

4. They

4. They waited upon God in Silence, (in all their Meetings) their Minds fixed on Gods Grace; and out of Earthly Thoughts. And none Spake until Gods Spirit Moved any one to Speak. Durst not Pray or Preach mearly from Head Knowledge.

For, sayeth the said J. C. *How careful were those that came to Witness the [Truth] at the begining, to keep Low and Humble, that they might not be drawn from their Own Measurs, lest their [Own] Words should become their Burthen, and they be Condemned in themselves, for uttering that [as in the Name of God] which came not from the Spirit of the Living God.* And saith R. Barckley, in Page 453 in his Works, *To Pray and Preach without the Spirit, is an offence to God; not profitable.*

5. They Met from House to House, and sometimes in Orchards, and did not

not limit themselves to Licensed Meeting-Houses; and were for Meeting in a great Town, rather than in a private Village.

6. They did not like to Lye a Night in such a place, where the People provided more variety of Food for them, than the Family used to do for themselves being very Temperate. *For Temperance (saith the Wise) Augments things that are Pleasant; and ordinary Fare is made equal in Sweetness to the greatest Dainties.*

7. They did not concern themselves in giving in their Names, or Voices, for the Electing of *Parliament Men*: Their Kingdom not being of this World.

8. They were come to the Fullfilling of that Scripture Prophecie, of *Learning War no more*, so could neither Fight

Fight with *Carnal Weapons*, nor hire Men to Fight: Trusting only upon God to Deliver them out of the Hands of all Enemies; Yea, Loved their Enemies.

9. They were always true to their Words and Promises unto all; Yea, when in Prison, for *Truths sake*, the Jaylors would sometimes Trust us with the Keys of the Prison (though many Fellons there) having the same Confidence in us, as *Pharoah's* Jaylor had in *Joseph*. For, saith the Wise, *He that breaks his Promise, forfeits his Faith, (which was the Security) and so is become as an Insidel, unto him to whom he Promised.*

10. They, when cast into Prison for good Conscience sake, or their Goods taken from them for their Testimony, greatly Rejoyced that God had counted them worthy to Suffer

Suffer for his Name, without repining against their Persecutors, nor durst they ask their Goods again, *Luke 6. 30.* nor go to Law to gain them, or use Law Tricks to avoid their Suffering, trusting in God alone for their Deliverance, *2. Cor. 12. 9.*

11. They bore a Conscientious Testimony against the oppression of *Tyths*; and being cast into Prison for the same, could not give Money to Lawyers, Jailors, &c. for Liberty, waiting Gods time for Deliverance. Nor could they consult with Lawyers to save their Goods from the Claymers of *Tyths*. *For in so doing, saith R.B. page 209, 529. they lose the Glory of their Sufferings, by not appearing as the Innocent followers of Christ.*

12. They durst not use Vain, and Idle Words, Foolish Jestings, nor Wagers, either for Money, or Goods.
Their

Their Words being few and Savory,
Ministering Grace to the Hearers, Mat.
12. 36. Having a Bridle for their
 Tongue, for *God sees all our Actions,*
Prov. 15. 3.

13. They gave a good Example,
 as to plainness in Apparel, account-
 ing such Professors in Religion *Proud,*
 that wore Party-Coloured Stuff, or
 such as was Striped, or Shining, or
 Flowered; and that wore Long-
 Scarfs, Silk-Gowns, Curled Periwigs,
 High Heads, Rich Hats, *or other costly*
Array, 1 Tim. 9. 10. Knowing that
 such Examples strengthened the Proud
 Spirit in others, which the Lord is
 about to bring down. *For Truth,*
saith J. C. made many Burn their Pic-
tures, Laces, and other needless Attire
and Superfluties.

14. They bore a Testimony also
 against such Professors of the *Truth,*
 as

as Delighted in Feasting at Marriages, &c. And that were for Rich Furniture in their Houses, Cloathing the Walls in them with Stuff, Brasse, Pewter, &c. while many poor, honest People wanted convenient Cloathing for their Backs. For, if God has given thee abundance, do not cast how to enlarge thy Barn, Shop, &c. but repaire immediately to the Bellies of such as are needy, and oppressed with want (to such people I mean, as are Honest and in want, and have not Hearts to seek Relief of the *Parish*) and make them the *Store-Houses* of thine Encrease. Whatsoever is given in this kind, is not *Lost*, but *Lent*; the Lord himself will Repay thee an Hundred fold; so as thou gives it not in *Vain Glory*, to be seen of Men.

15. They durst not give Flattering *Titles* unto Men or Women, to their Faces; as my Lord, your *Worship*,
Sir,

Sir, Master, or Mistress, except to such as was really their *Masters* or *Mistresses*, nor much Bowing to them, antiently called Worship, knowing that it exalted the Proud Spirit in them the more.

16. Those of them that were Tradesmen, having got sufficient to maintain themselves, strived not for much Riches, (knowing it to be a Snare) left their Trades, or the most part thereof, to the Younger, or their Apprentices. *Not at all (saith I. C.) affecting great things for themselves, nor to get a Name in the Earth, but to stand approved in Gods Sight, which they valued beyond the judgment of the Wise, and the Honourable in the Earth, or of any of the Sons of Men, is also fully known to them that were Converted in the beginning.* See also Chap. 13. Sect. 7 and 8 in *No Cross no Crown*.

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17. They

17. They could, in much Love, begin and finish all concerns relating to their Society, as to Marriages, Relief of the Poor, Admonishing Evil Persons, and Differences, &c. to prevent Suits at Law. At the end of their Religious Meetings (a Religious Meeting being a Church, *Rom. 16. 3, 5. Col. 45.*) where the least esteemed of in the Church, had Liberty to Judge, *1 Cor. 6. 4. Leaving every Meeting to their own Power.* See *W. P's. Rejoynder to John Faldo.*

But of latter times some have swerved from the said good Order in the Churches, which caused another worthy Man, an Ancient Labourer in Christ's Vine-yard, to give in his Testimony (amongst others) part thereof is as follows, *viz.* 'We Believe in his Name [*Christ Jesus*] and 'he only is our Lord, Lawgiver, and 'the Shepherd of his Sheep; and they hear

'hear his Voice, and the Voice of a
'Stranger, they will not follow.

'These Sayings are professed by us
'all, but I find but a few in the prac-
'tise of them.

'I might mention the Doctrine and
'Practise of the *Apostles*, and a *Cloud of*
'*Witnesses*, both before and since, that
'they neither did Command, nor
'Compel, Conformity, in matters of
'Conscience, relating to Church-Dif-
'cipline, but I shall (upon this occasi-
'on, and at this time) rather mention
'the *Truth*, which we received in the
'Begining.

'The breaking forth of it, was very
'Glorious, after so long a *Night of*
'*Darkness*. Oh! How acceptable was
'it to my Soul, with many more? It
'can never be forgotten.

'How contrary was *Compulsion*, and
'*Driving into Conformity* to it? Even
'as *Light* is contrary to *Darkness*. Oh!
'How did *Love* and *Unity* abound a-
mongst

‘mongst us, that received the *Truth*
 ‘in the Love of it? Every one sitting
 ‘under his own Vine, and Drinking
 ‘of the *Fountain of Life*, which the
 ‘Lord hath opened in us; and walk-
 ‘ing in that Liberty, wherewith
 ‘Christ had set us free.

‘Not a Word of *Conformity*, or
 ‘*Church-Discipline*, for many Years, &
 ‘then we Loved one another, even as
 ‘*Christ had Loved us*, freely for his
 ‘*Name sake*; and went hand in hand
 ‘together, serving the Lord, and one
 ‘another, and the least breathing that
 ‘was after God in any.

‘How glad were we to see the
 ‘Faces one of another? And how did
 ‘our *Harmony* sound in all our *Meet-*
 ‘*ings*, before *Conformity* was brought
 ‘in amongst us; and Cryed up as the
 ‘only *Mark of Christianity*? Without
 ‘it neither *Hand*, nor *Eye*, unless with
 ‘a Frown; nor Buying, nor Selling,
 ‘where its Power reacheth.

‘This

'This *Conformity* hath been the
 'cause of *Divisions*, and *Persecution* in
 'Ages past: First *Enforce*, then *Perse-*
 '*cute*; and much Innocent Blood hath
 'been shed by it. It had its being in
 'the *Apostacy*; and is most cry'd up in
 'the thickest *Darkness*; begining at
 'the *Pope* to the meanest *Profession*.

'But I did once thing, it could ne-
 'ver have crept in amongst us, at least
 'so soon, being so many faithful *Testi-*
 '*monies* against it, both in Word and
 'Writing; still fresh in our Remem-
 'brance. But the Enemy of the Souls
 'of Mankind, is busie *Now*, as in Ages
 'past, with his Subtile Devices, to be-
 'guile the Souls of the *Simple*; trans-
 'forming himself into an *Angel* of
 'Light; and putting upon him the
 'finest Dress, in the purest Profession
 'that the Sons of Men can make
 'mention of, to draw away the
 'Heart from the Lord, from
 'waiting upon him, for the purest
 Stream

'This

' Stream of Life and Love, into the
 ' Puddle of *Conformity*, finding it the
 ' easiest way of entrance; having many
 ' specious pretences, and fine cover-
 ' ings.

' Oh! my Heart is grieved for it, &
 ' I am often bowed down before my
 ' God, because of these things; and I
 ' am not alone, but there is a little
 ' Remnant with me, whose *Names* are
 ' Written in the Book of Life; and
 ' whose Garments are Washed in the
 ' Blood of the *Lamb*; and wears the
 ' Seamless Coat, that is Woven from
 ' the top to the bottom.

' And these things lay upon me to
 ' clear my Conscience, I could not
 ' keep silent any longer, that I might
 ' be clear of the Blood of all Men;
 ' having not long to be on the stage of
 ' this World, I might lay down my
 ' Head in Peace, as many of my
 ' Brethren have done before me; *who*
 ' finished their course with the same Testi-
 ' mony.

18. They

18. They did cast none out of their Religious Society; but such as the World saw them to be great Sinners. And if at any time they declared that such Persons had cut themselves off from their Society, by often, and wilful Sinning against God, yet, notwithstanding, did not make it their business to render them Odious to all People; but in *Christian Love* labour to win them to the *Truth* again, knowing there was hopes, while the parties saw themselves to be Sinners.

Remembering what our Lord Teacheth us, by his Example (of Charity to Persons and Churches) in his Epistle sent to the Seven Churches of *Asia*. The Good that was found in them he approved of, and Encouraged, and reprov'd only the Evil. He did not over-look the Good in them, because of the Evil, neither did he approve of the Evil, because of the Good: *But*, saith he, *I have somewhat against thee, Repent, &c.* Let

Let us learn to be like-Minded, least any, by false and confused Judgment, heap Judgment and Condemnation upon their own Heads. Taking the advice of the said J. C. who saith, *I Exhort all to come to the Light and Spirit of Christ within them, to shew unto them their miscarriages, and whether they hold the Truth, as it was in the beginning.*

Lastly, Let none that are Guilty, think to wipe their Mouths, and say, These things concern not me. Well, to the Witness in thee thou art brought, from whence there is no Appeal; for if that condemns thee, God is greater. See Truths Propress, pag. 10.

Concluding in the Words of R. B. p. 683. *That the Evil either in Opinion, or Practise, ought neither to be Spared, Encouraged, nor Fomented, under any pretence of Love whatsoever.*

FINIS.